



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

### **For Immediate Release**

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### **Virginia Department of Social Services Issues New Warnings Regarding Passport Denial Program for Child Support Evaders**

**Richmond** – Beginning January 23, 2007, more stringent passport regulations go into effect requiring air travelers to have a passport when traveling outside the United States. This change in policy is part of the government's anti-terrorism efforts. Within the next two years, all forms of travel into the U.S. will require a passport. For parents who owe child support and wish to travel, these new regulations will have even greater significance.

Currently, 86,481 Virginians owing more than \$1.2 billion, an average of \$14,402 per person, have been denied access to a passport for failing to pay child support. Under the most recent requirements of the Federal Deficit Reduction Act, which went into effect October 1, 2006, any noncustodial parent who had amassed a past due child support debt exceeding \$2,500 became ineligible to receive a United States passport. From 1998 through 2006, passport denials resulted in the collection of \$1.4 million in Virginia. The \$2,500 threshold, coupled with the new federal policy requiring a passport upon entry, is expected to increase child support collections even more dramatically.

Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr. said, "These new requirements impress upon Virginians the importance of fulfilling their obligations to their children and the passport denial program underscores that goal."

The federal government began the Passport Denial Program in 1998 when states were provided with another administrative tool for collecting child support

monies. Under the current Passport Denial Program, 100 passports are denied daily. To date, states have voluntarily reported lump sum collections in excess of \$80 million due to passport denials and subsequent payments to have a passport reissued.

“When faced with limits on foreign travel, delinquent parents have been quick to step up to the plate and honor those obligations,” said Nick Young, Director of Virginia’s Child Support Enforcement Program.

More information about Virginia’s Child Support Enforcement program can be found on the VDSS Web site at: <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcse.html>

*The Virginia Department of Social Services (<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>) Home Office is located in Richmond and administers social services programs consistent with Federal and State law and policy of the State Board of Social Services through 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) throughout the state. The VDSS mission is “People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities.”*

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